

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LONDON 11713 111830Z

63

ACTION PM-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 ACDA-19 COME-00 L-03

CIAE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 RSC-01 EB-11 NASA-04 SCI-06

SS-20 NSC-07 CG-00 DOTE-00 FAA-00 SP-03 PRS-01 USIA-15

DRC-01 /149 W

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R 111621Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3779

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION GENEVA

DOD WASHDC

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 11713

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: MARR, PINR, TPHY, UK, FR, NO

SUBJECT: NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN WEATHER STATION PROJECT

REF: LONDON 9693 AND 9894; STATE 163187

1. MOD HAS DEBRIEFED US ON THE EARLY AUGUST NAOWS MEETING AT GENEVA. AS DEPARTMENT UNDOUBTEDLY IS AWARE, THE MEETING WAS LARGELY INCONCLUSIVE, WITH DECISIONS ON FURTHER OPERATIONS BEING DEFERRED TO THE NEXT GATHERING OF PARTICIPANTS, NOW SCHEDULED FOR EARLY NOVEMBER.

2. MOD PARTICIPANT TOLD US THE MAJOR DIFFICULTY IN AUGUST WAS THAT FIRM COST ESTIMATES FOR BOTH STATION VESSELS AND THEIR OPERATION WERE UNAVAILABLE, MAKING MEMBER NATIONS RELUCTANT TO COMMIT THEMSELVES TO THE PROGRAM. THE SOVIET REPRESENTATIVE SAID MOSCOW STILL DESIRES TO
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PAGE 02 LONDON 11713 111830Z

OPERATE AT LEAST ONE STATION BUT BACKED OFF FROM A FIRM

COMMITMENT WHEN IT APPEARED HIS EXPENDITURE DATA WERE SUSPECT. SOVIET INTEREST CONTINUES KEEN FOR PLAN THAT WOULD PERMIT THEM TO OPERATE ONE OR MORE STATIONS AS FAR SOUTH (I.E. BELOW STATION CHARLIE) AS POSSIBLE. BRITISH ALSO INFER SOVIETS MAY PRESS FOR VISITS TO WESTERN EUROPEAN PORTS, A PROSPECT HMG CLEARLY DOES NOT WELCOME.

3. COST OF NAOWS PROJECT ARE ESCALLATING. HMG IS UNSURE OF COST FIGURES FOR SHIPS THEY WOULD BUILD, BUT SUSPECTS THEY MAY GREATLY EXCEED THE 3.25 MILLION POUNDS PER SHIP NOW PROJECTED. HMG ALSO IS AWARE THAT COSTS OF RENEWED US PARTICIPATION (SHOULD WE DECIDE TO REENTER THE SCHEME IN AN EFFORT TO KEEP THE SOVIETS OUT) WOULD BE HIGH AND MIGHT, IN FACT, NOT SERVE TO EXCLUDE SOVIET PARTICIPATION. IT IS POSSIBLE, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT A US UNDERTAKING TO OPERATE STATION CHARLIE COULD PLAY INTO MOSCOW'S HANDS BY GIVING IT AN OPENING TO OFFER SOVIET MANNING OF A NEW STATION FURTHER SOUTH (AND IN A MORE SECURITY-SENSITIVE AREA). HMG FEARS SUCH AN OFFER MIGHT READILY BE ACCEPTED BY ITS EUROPEAN PARTNERS.

4. WESTERN EUROPEAN REPRESENTATIVES WILL BE MEETING IN LONDON ON 21 OCTOBER IN AN EFFORT TO HAMMER OUT A COMMON FINANCIAL LINE FOR THE NOVEMBER MEETING. MOD IS MOST ANXIOUS TO KNOW OUR POSITION ON THESE MATTERS AND TO DISCUSS WITH US THE IMPLICATIONS OF VARIOUS POSSIBLE OUTCOMES AT GENEVA (E.G., THE SCHEME COULD ABORT ENTIRELY DUE TO ESCALLATING COSTS AND TOO NARROW PARTICIPATION; A FOUR-STATION NETWORK OPERATED BY FRANCE, NORWAY, THE UK AND THE USSR COULD EMERGE; OR A FOUR-STATION NETWORK MIGHT BE AGREED, TWO STATIONS OPERATED BY THE SOVIETS).

5. MOD THEREFORE WISHES TO INVITE US REPRESENTATIVES TO ONE OR TWO DAY BILATERAL MEETING ON THE NAOWS PROGRAM IN LONDON ABOUT 9-10 OCTOBER. THE BRITISH SUGGEST THAT A ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION BE HELD AT THE DEPUTY UNDERSECRETARY LEVEL, WITH EWEN BROADBENT (DEPUTY UNDERSECRETARY OF STATE FOR AIR) AS HOST. ALL ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT COULD BE DISCUSSED IN DETAIL AND AVAILABLE OPTIONS THOROUGHLY VENTILATED. IN THIS MANNER MOD BELIEVES A BETTER APPRECIATION OF THE REAL SECURITY ISSUES CAN BE GAINED AND, IF ANGLO-AMERICAN AGREEMENT IS REACHED, APPROPRIATE TACTICS FOR FOLLOW-ON MEETINGS CAN BE ADOPTED.

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LONDON 11713 111830Z

ATION OF THE REAL SECURITY ISSUES CAN BE GAINED AND, IF ANGLO-AMERICAN AGREEMENT IS REACHED, APPROPRIATE TACTICS FOR FOLLOW-ON MEETINGS CAN BE ADOPTED.

6. REQUEST COMMENTS.
SOHM

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